

TOWNSHIP OF SADDLE BROOK PLANNING BOARD

Following are the minutes of the Saddle Brook Planning Board's Regular Meeting, held on Monday, July 18, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

1. FLAG SALUTE

2. ROLL CALL: Mr. Ambrogio, Mr. Compitello, Mr. Hickey, Mr. LaGuardia, Councilman Gierek, Mr. Cook, Mr. Maniscalco and Mayor White - PRESENT

Mr. Browne, Ms. Barrale, Mr. Camporeale and Mr. Mazzone - ABSENT

Also present were Stephen Pellino, Board attorney and James Zembur, stand in for Board engineer.

3. CHAIRMAN ANNOUNCES – OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

4. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Maniscalco – We received a letter from BT Newyo, LLC regarding 280 North Midland Ave. stating they will not be heard this evening. They will provide new notice.

5. INFORMAL APPLICATION

Saddle Brook Board of Education, 355 Mayhill Street, Block 1104, Lot 22
Anthony Gianforcaro, architect for the school district.

Mr. Gianforcaro – We are proposing a referendum in December. In order to go to the public and ask for a referendum, we must go to the Dept. of Education and get an approval. The site is over 45,000 square feet, so we are required to come before the Planning Board. What we ask from you is a letter stating that we meet the Master Plan and whether you have comments. If we get the letter, what it does is circumvents a 55 day waiting period. After we appear before you, you have 55 days to comment on the plan we bring before you. With the letter we can move that process along more quickly. The main portion of the referendum is an addition to the rear part of the middle school/high school. There are many other things we're doing: roofing, security upgrades, windows, ceilings, light, etc. Right now the high school/middle school includes grades 7-12. Our proposal is to put an addition for 6-8. Even though they will be attached, they will essentially be two separate buildings; the back portion 6-8 and the front 9-12. The proposal also includes putting turf on the football field. Most districts are going with a turf field so you don't have to rest the field. We are proposing lights for the field. There would be a secondary, practice field, which would be another question. It's going to be a three question referendum. The biggest portion is question 1, which includes the main field. There will be approximately \$49 million worth of work in question #1. The additional field will be in question #2. We will continue to have the access road around the building for emergency access. We'll put a few more parking spaces in the front. Middle school will have its own separate entrance. (Referred to plans). When you come in, the offices are up front, then the cafeteria, music & band room. The auxiliary gym at the high school today is going to be the gym for grades 6-8. The main gym will be the high school gym. We have a media center and in the back we have a two story area with classrooms. We need community support to do this. If the Department of Education drags their feet, the referendum could be pushed to January. There's only 5 times you can have a referendum in the state: January, March, September, December and whenever you have School Board elections, which for most of the state is November. If the referendum passes, it would take us 9 months to a year to design it. The footprint is about 45,000 square

feet, total construction would be about 60,000. It would take 2 years to construct. We hope to open the doors in September 2026.

Mr. Hickey – How did this come about? Who decided they need this?

Ms. Violetti (superintendent of schools) – It stems from 3 strategic planning sessions, which includes parent representative and administration. We had about 50 people at each meeting. An email and letters were sent out to the community about the meetings. Our K-6 buildings are maxing out on space.

Mr. Gianforcaro – Right now, you have 6th graders in an elementary school. They belong in a middle school. You have 7th and 8th graders right now mixing with 12th graders.

Ms. Violetti – This also creates space for programs in Saddle Brook to include an 18-21 special ed program, an aviation program and lab and a STEM lab. We want to have the space to do that. Right now, we're starved on space at the high school as well.

Mr. LaGuardia - What's the total attendance in the high school now?

Ms. Violetti – 1,700. With our special ed population, we max out.

Mr. LaGuardia – What about Washington School?

Ms. Violetti – Part of the referendum is to renovate it for the preschool program.

Mr. Gianforcaro – We did look at doing the project at that location, but it is more cost effective to do it as we proposed because we don't have to build another gym.

Mr. LaGuardia – How is this going to affect flooding over there?

Mr. Gianforcaro – In order to do this, we have to go to the DEP. We have to have a zero volume increase. Half of the volume will come out of our football field. When you have a grass field, you have a crown in the field. When we build turf, we cut that out. You only have a half a percent of slope on a turf field, so we're going to gain half of the volume just by cutting the dirt out of the football field. The other plan is to lower this. We're not building up around the school.

Mayor White – Are you going to put in a detention basin by the field?

Mr. Gianforcaro – Yes. Right now, there are pumps back there to lower the water on the field. We're going to have the same thing. We're going to put in an emergency generator in, which they don't have now, so it will never fail.

Mr. Maniscalco – What will you do with 540 Saddle River Rd. when the township offices move to their new building?

Mr. Gianforcaro – Upgrades to that building will be question #3. The plan is to gut the building and renovate the whole inside with all new ceilings, lights, floors, electrical service upgrade, air conditioning, ADA accessibility, elevator, upgrade the bathrooms, etc.

Ms. Violetti – The plan is to have a professional learning lab, as a source of revenue for the district.

Mr. Hickey – Are the special ed kids that come here all from Saddle Brook?

Ms. Violetti – Washington School has 6 students for preschool, Smith School has the ADA classrooms that maxes out at 6, and the 2 LLD classrooms that max out at 10. Then you have resource rooms. Historically, it's always been at Smith. We're trying to create an ADA at Long School so that children are not separated from their siblings. Next year we're trying to have it at Franklin School. Having the children there teaches acceptance.

Mr. Hickey – Are you bringing children from out of the town into the system?

Ms. Violetti – That's not the goal. If an ADA classroom is not maxed out, we might take an out of district student. Right now, we pay out of district anywhere from \$50,000-\$120,000, not including transportation.

Mr. Hickey – Are you looking for federal money for this project as well?

Mr. Gianforcaro – Not for the addition, but for all the other work that we're doing. Right now if you go to referendum, the state is still paying 40% of debt service aid for service types of work.

If the referendum fails and we have to do it with the school budget, you pay 100%.

Mr. Hickey – Is this open bid?

Mr. Gianforcaro - This has to be open bid and it has to be prevailing wage.

Mr. Pellino – You expect no state aid on the addition?

Mr. Gianforcaro – When the state approves this, we will get a Preliminary Eligible Cost letter which will state how much funding. We're hoping to get something, but right now for budgeting purposes, we're assuming we're not for the addition. On all other work, we're assuming we will get 40%. The state has to approve our entire project along with the cost estimate. That will be spelled out in the question for the voter. It will say how much the voters are responsible for and how much the

State will end up paying.

Mr. Hickey – Will it give the estimated amount per household?

Ms. Violetti – It's on the district website under referendum.

Mr. Hickey – How much is it?

Mr. Gianforcaro – That number will come out in our presentation. One of the benefits for us coming out now is we have somewhere around half the increase in tax being lowered because we have debt coming off line. The increase if we do all questions is going to be \$550/year on the avg household, but \$278 is coming offline, so the net increase is \$277/year. When we give estimates, they are conservative based on the fact that the interest rate has gone up.

Mr. Maniscalco – If you bring kids back into the district that going out to other schools, that's also going to help us too, right?

Ms. Violette – Yes. We currently send 57 students out of district.

Mr. Maniscalco – Are you talking about bringing trades in addition to things like STEM?

Ms. Violetti - There is talk of it. No promises. We're starting an aviation program next year, but it's in the back of a biology class because we don't have the room.

Mr. Pellino – How many classrooms and offices are in the addition?

Mr. Gianforcaro - 20 general ed classrooms and 6 offices

Mr. Pellino – What do your student population projections look like?

Mr. Gianforcaro – The next 4-5 years is flat.

Ms. Violetti – Our preschool program has grown rapidly. Also, we have number of students who go to tech schools. We pay for that. We can have them come back to us if we have these programs, like culinary arts, aviation technology, etc.

Mr. Gianforcaro – The savings adds up.

Mr. LaGuardia – You said there are three questions. Have much do they each cost?

Mr. Gianforcaro – The first question (addition and main field) is just under \$49 million, the second question (extra practice field and other reno) is \$6.7 and the third question (Coolidge School) is \$3 million.

Mr. Pellino – It's important to remember that the property values reflect the quality of your school system.

Mr. Hickey – How many new jobs will this create?

Ms. Violetti – Maybe 12.

Mr. Pellino – Our job as Planning Board is not to approve or disapprove this project. It's basically to say they were here, they presented it, and if we have suggestions, we can add them.

Mr. Hickey – Are safety measures, like cameras going to be in place?

Ms. Violetti – Yes. Part of question #1 is for security vestibules in each of the buildings. There will be cameras everywhere.

Inaudible recording

Mr. Compitello made a motion, seconded by Mayor White to authorize Stephen Pellino, Board attorney, to write a letter saying this was presented to the Planning Board and is consistent with the master plan.

VOTE: Mr. Ambrogio, Mr. Compitello, Mr. Hickey, Mr. LaGuardia, Councilman Gierek, Mr. Cook, Mr. Maniscalco and Mayor White - YES

6. MINUTES

Mr. Compitello made a motion; seconded by Councilman Gierek to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2022 meeting. All in Favor - YES

7. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Compitello made a motion; seconded by Councilman Gierek to accept and file the correspondence received. All in Favor - YES

8. VOUCHERS

Mr. Compitello made a motion; seconded by Councilman Gierek to pay the following vouchers, provided funds are available:

Carroll Engineering, 06/13/22, BT Newyo, LLC, \$78

Carroll Engineering, 06/13/22, BP Products North America, \$156

Basile Birchwale & Pellino, 07/01/22, Review of Ordinance 1723-22, \$125

All in Favor – YES

9. OPEN AND CLOSE THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Compitello made a motion; seconded by Councilman Gierek to open the meeting to the public. All in Favor - YES

No public participation.

Mr. Compitello made a motion; seconded by Councilman Gierek to close the meeting to the public. All in Favor – YES

10. ADJOURN

Mr. Compitello made a motion; seconded by Councilman Gierek to adjourn the meeting. All in Favor - YES

Meeting adjourned 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jayne Kapner
Planning Board Secretary